Managing Your New Home

All about your warranty, managing and reporting defects, emergencies and household maintenance

A comprehensive guide for new home owners with compliments from

Your Developer

in association with

After build
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Introduction

We hope you find this booklet useful. After Build has produced this in conjunction with your developer and our combined experience in managing new homes.

Moving house can be a testing time and we know it takes a while to settle down once the move is complete. New surroundings, different systems, strange procedures - it all amounts to quite an experience - but one we want you to enjoy!

So '**Managing Your New Home**' will provide you with a better understanding of just what you can expect from your new surroundings. You may not have previously owned or lived in a brand new property, but even for the initiated, technologies are constantly evolving and we think it would be worth spending some time reading through the information we have provided.

Importantly, we have looked at this from the perspective that from time-to-time you may need to report a problem. For the most part, it will be minor or just irritating - and After Build want to help ensure that on such occasions we can assist you in resolving the issue as quickly and painlessly as possible.

After Build is an independent nationwide organisation, employed by your developer to provide a defect management service. If something in your property becomes defective during the first 2 years following legal completion, we will work with you to get the matter rectified. We operate through the developer and all of the original sub-contractors who were involved in the construction and finishing of your new home - so our start point is to go back to the relevant trade and instruct them to put right any failings of workmanship or materials. This is usually a relatively straight forward process, however we know that sometimes it can take a little longer and a bit more effort to put things right. Our responsibility is to work to the standards set by your 10 year warranty policy provider and apply these whenever involved in managing a defect. We hope that you find our service helpful, should you ever have cause to use it.

Your Warranty - the first 2 years

What you need to know

Your new home warranty

Your home is a unique product - hand built from a wide variety of traditional and modern materials. It is possible that following occupation you may encounter minor problems as the building dries out and settles down.

Pre-occupation

Before you take ownership of your new home, your developer should arrange for you to walk around the property and identify any last minute snags which will require rectification. At this stage, anything you jointly agree needs attention shall remain the developer's responsibility to complete - please retain a dialogue with the developer to deal with these matters.

Legal completion

Your new Home has the benefit of a 10 year warranty which has been arranged by your developer with one of the recognised warranty providers. The warranty policy belongs to you and your solicitor or conveyancer should hand the policy to you when you complete. It is advisable that you spend a little time reading this as there is a lot of useful information that will help you obtain the maximum enjoyment from your new home. During the first 2 years of this warranty the developer remains responsible to manage any defects that may occur. In this instance After Build has been engaged to manage the developer's obligations - this is know as the Builder's Liability period.

What is a defect?

A 'Defect' is a breach of any mandatory warranty requirement by the developer. Those items generally not included in the definition of 'Home' would be fence, temporary structure, swimming pool, lift, electrical or electronic items (whether built in or not) excluding fixed wiring, lighting system, heating system, air conditioning, smoke alarms, waste disposal units or water softening equipment installed at the date of the insurance certificate.

The developer is not responsible for the general maintenance of your property - as the homeowner you are.

How to report a defect

Before you report a defect please refer to our 'Warranty Checklist' (pages11-16) this explains what is covered and what is not. In the first instance (except in emergencies) you will need to report your defect in writing (unless otherwise specified by your developer).

Your Warranty - the first 2 years

What you need to know

Important

It is important you check for damaged items within the property and follow the developer's specific policy for reporting these. This can vary from one company to another but usually you will be required to sign a handover form confirming that you are satisfied with the condition of the building and its contents. In particular (but not exclusively) items such as:

- Wall and base units
- Sanitary ware
- Glass and tiles
- Appliances
- Sinks and worktops

Emergencies

Please follow the procedure explained to you by your developer.

Non emergencies

After Build's office is open Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm. Operatives will work between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday (not weekends or Bank Holidays).

Weather damage

Damage to properties caused by storms or extreme weather conditions are not covered by the warranty and shall remain the homeowner's responsibility. This includes (but is not limited to) such items as roofs, tiles and fences. In the event of such an occurrence you should contact your insurance provider. If you live in an apartment we suggest you contact the Managing Agent.

Accidental damage

Damage caused by accidental or improper use will not be covered by the warranty. This will remain the home-owner's responsibility.

Notes

1. Scratches and marks to glazing and walls are determined in natural light (only) at a distance of 2 metres (or 3 metres for toughened glass).

2. If we need to carry out work in your home please ensure the area(s) concerned are cleared of furniture and personal belongings before our operative arrives as they will not have time to do this for you.

How to report a defect

There are numerous ways to report a defect and different developers have different ideas about how the homeowner should do this. When reporting a defect FOR THE FIRST TIME your developer would like you to:

Write to After Build* ☐

Telephone After Build ☐

* includes e-mail

Once reported you can choose the form of communication you find most convenient.

Telephone
0845 456 4631

Post
After Build
Units 1 & 2 Woodfield Farm Offices
Isaacs Lane, Burgess Hill
West Sussex RH15 8RA

Fax
01444 230222

Website
www.afterbuild.com/ReportDefect.html

E-Mail
defects@afterbuild.com

Please ensure that you provide as much detail as possible. If you have photographs this can often be helpful. After we have received your information one of our Coordinators will call you to discuss your problem where necessary.

If it proves necessary to deploy an operative to resolve the issue we will do so in one of the following two ways:-

1. For most minor problems we will deploy an After Build operative;

2. For major items or defects where a warranty applies (most plumbing and electrical, fitted kitchens, contract flooring, windows and doors) we are contractually required to report this on your behalf to the original *sub-contractor. After Build will liaise with the relevant trade and instruct them to attend and carry out works, but we will make all the arrangements on their behalf so you only need have one point of contact. It is our aim to resolve most

How to report a defect

problems within 30 days however this is subject to the reasonable cooperation of both the homeowner and the sub-contractor, and where applicable the ordering of parts.

After Build office hours

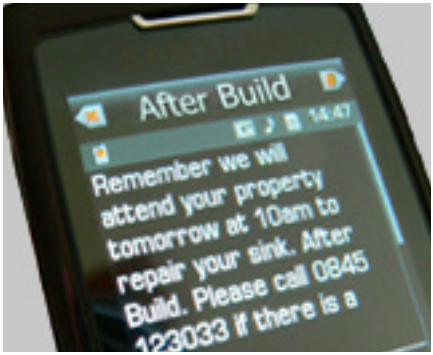
Monday to Friday
8.00 am to 5.00 pm

Answer service

An answer service operates at times of peak-call volume and during weekends, evenings and Bank Holidays. Please feel welcome to leave a message along with your name and contact number and we will call you back at the earliest opportunity.

Reminders

Where we are able, our team will sometimes send you an SMS (text) message to your mobile phone as this can prove an effective way of sending out reminders prior to an appointment.


After Build
14:47
Remember we will attend your property tomorrow at 10am to repair your sink. After Build. Please call 0845 123033 if there is a

Emergencies

So far all of the information we have provided relates to 'routine' or 'non-emergency' defects.

For emergencies turn to page 8.

How to report an emergency

In the unlikely event you experience an emergency you must follow your developer's emergency procedure.

You **ARE NOT COVERED** by the After Build **EMERGENCY** service (follow the alternative instructions issued by your developer) ☐

You **ARE COVERED** by the After Build **EMERGENCY** service (follow the instructions pages 8-9). ☐

After Build provide an emergency service to homeowners. It is important that you ONLY use this for genuine emergencies as described on this information sheet. An emergency is defined as:-

"A sudden and unforeseen incident immediately creating a risk to the health of the occupant(s) and/or damage to the property rendering it uninhabitable, insecure or dangerous."

There may be occasions when you consider a situation to be an emergency but to ensure we can provide a prompt and reliable service to those genuinely in need of our assistance we must apply the following guidelines. Please DO NOT call the After Build emergency service unless your problem fits at least one of the following criteria:

1. Drainage and plumbing

Problems will be deemed to be an emergency when:-

a. The toilet is the only toilet in the property and cannot be flushed manually using a bucket of water;

b. The toilet is leaking even when not in use and the leak is gushing and non-containable;

c. The bath, shower, basin or pipe-work is leaking even when not in use and the leak is gushing and non-containable;

d. External drain(s) is blocked and backing-up (if it is deemed that the cause of the blockage was due to inappropriate use by the occupant - the occupant may be liable to be charged for the call-out costs).

2. Heating and boilers

Problems will be deemed to be an emergency when:-

a. The boiler fails to operate between 1st October and 31st March;

b. If the boiler is older than 12 months and has not been serviced the call will not be deemed an emergency (the occupant is responsible for maintaining boiler service intervals);

c. If the occupant still has hot water and heating this will not be deemed an emergency;

d. If there is the possibility of a gas leak the occupant must leave the property and call TRANSCO immediately;

How to report an emergency

e. If there is the possibility of an airlock in the radiators the occupant will be advised that should an engineer be deployed they will be covered in the event that the air-lock is due to a faulty radiator valve, otherwise if the radiators merely needed bleeding, the occupant may be charged for the call out costs.

3. Electrical

Problems will be deemed to be an emergency when:-

a. There is no electrical supply and the consumer unit RCD switch fails to restore the supply;

b. If there is no supply to the immediate neighbourhood this will not be deemed an emergency as it would appear to be a utility company problem.

4. Security

Problems will be deemed to be an emergency when:-

a. An exterior door is damaged compromising the security of the property;

b. A double glazed unit is damaged compromising the security of the property;

c. The interconnecting door between an integral garage and the property and the garage door itself are damaged compromising the security of the property;

d. A door or double glazed unit in a detached garage or outbuilding is damaged is not deemed to be an emergency;

e. Damage to an interior door that does not compromise the security of the property is not deemed to be an emergency.

REMEMBER

Please be advised, you may be charged if you call this Emergency service for any other reason than those described on pages 8-9.

When we deploy an engineer it is our aim to arrest the immediate problem but not necessarily to resolve the cause - this may be arranged at a later date.

Any consequential damage caused as the result of a genuine emergency will be dealt with through After Build after the emergency has been addressed e.g. re-decoration following a water leak.

General maintenance

To help you obtain maximum enjoyment from your new property, here are a few useful guidelines on maintaining your new home.

Before moving in

Most developer's have a well prepared process to ensure any issues requiring attention (e.g small areas of paintwork that may have been missed, damaged tiles etc.) are noted during a walk-round the property with you, prior to legal completion. It is worth making sure that you document any such points with the developer, sign and date this; certain problems such as scratched glass, damaged tiles and sanitary ware cannot always be rectified later. These issues are referred to as SNAGS; After Build is not generally responsible for dealing with SNAGS.

Instructions and manuals

Check to ensure you have been provided operating instructions and user manuals for all your appliances, heating/hot water and security systems. If you have not, ask your developer at the earliest possible stage.

Standards of finish

Every property is unique and hand-crafted. There will always be some small variation in the finished appearance of the construction of your home. As long as these conform to the warranty providers build standards this will be considered to be acceptable.

Use your trickle vents

Drying out

During the drying out process different materials will shrink at different rates and this can result in minor cracks which are perfectly normal. After Build is not required to rectify these unless they are excessive (if you can fit a pound coin in the crack this would be considered excessive as it is greater than 2mm, up to which this will be covered by homeowner maintenance). How to minimise shrinkage:-

1. Do not turn the heating up high - maintain a steady even temperature;
2. Open windows when you're in the property and leave 'trickle vents' open when you're not to assist with the even circulation of air;
3. Leave fitted wardrobe doors ajar to avoid the build up of moisture as this can cause mould;
4. Use your ventilation system in bathrooms and the kitchen area.

Your Warranty - the first 2 years

Not sure what is covered?

If you have a problem and you're not clear about who takes responsibility, take a look down our warranty check-list. It may not cover absolutely everything - but we do refer to the vast majority of typical occurrences. There are basically three possible categorisations we can apply - either individually or in combination and these are:

☑ It IS a legitimate defect and is covered by After Build - contact us and report it

⊘ It is NOT a legitimate defect and is not covered by After Build

👍 It is household maintenance and is your responsibility as a homeowner

ITEM	ISSUE	COMMENTS	
Alarm installations	Failure	Contact After Build.	☑
Alarm installations	Servicing	Servicing is the homeowner's responsibility. Failure to carry out annual maintenance could invalidate your warranty.	⊘
Appliances (electrical)	Failure	Call the manufacturer and follow instructions in your appliance warranty cover.	⊘
Appliances (electrical)	Damage	All damage is the homeowner's responsibility.	⊘
Blockages	Wastes/drains/traps	Contact After Build. Blockages caused by homeowner are NOT covered and may incur a charge.	☑
Cracks to bricks/mortar	Less than 5 mm	Minor cracking due to shrinkage is normal and can be expected.	⊘

Your Warranty - the first 2 years

Not sure what is covered?

ITEM	ISSUE	COMMENTS	
Cracks to bricks/mortar	Exceeding 5 mm	Contact After Build.	☑
Central heating boiler	Breakdown	Contact After Build.	☑
Central heating boiler	Servicing	Servicing is the homeowner's responsibility. Failure to maintain annual service checks can reduce the life of your system and invalidate the warranty (refer to the service label on the boiler).	🚫 👍
Central heating	Leaking pipes/radiators	Contact After Build.	☑
Central heating	Noisy	Contact After Build if this occurs during the first 12 months.	☑ 👍
Chips and scratches	Glass/sanitary ware/ cabinets/w'tops/floors	Claims for damage to items in the home must be made through the developer.	🚫
Colour variations	Wood, marble etc.	Colour and tone variations in natural materials are normal and to be expected.	🚫
Condensation		Condensation is normal and due to the drying out process. It can be eased by adequate ventilation (e.g. ensure trickle vents are open).	🚫
Conservatory	Leaks	Contact After Build.	☑
Cracks to concrete	Less than 5 mm	Minor cracking due to shrinkage is normal and can be expected.	🚫
Cracks to concrete	Exceeding 5 mm	Contact After Build.	☑
Cracks to dry-lining, ceilings and internal paintwork	2 mm or less (and 4 mm or less for stair strings)	Some minor cracking due to shrinkage is quite normal and can be expected. Maintenance and touch-ups are the homeowner's responsibility.	🚫 👍

Your Warranty Check-List

Not sure what is covered?

ITEM	ISSUE	COMMENTS	
Cracks to dry-lining, ceilings and internal paintwork	Exceeding 2 mm (and exceeding 4 mm for stair strings)	Contact After Build. We will attend once to correct this but not before the first 12 months.	☑
Doors		Contact After Build.	☑
Doors	Lock/latch adjustment	Contact After Build.	☑
Doors	Warping Easement	Contact After Build. If a door is catching on carpet that you have had fitted, this is a homeowner's responsibility.	☑ 👍
Electrical		Contact After Build.	☑
Electrical	Transformers, circuits, sockets and switches	Contact the supplier directly.	🚫
Electrical	Damaged fittings and blown bulbs	Homeowner maintenance.	🚫
Extractor fans	Failure	Contact After Build.	☑
Fencing	Loose panels/posts	Contact After Build in the first 12 months. Thereafter this is a homeowner maintenance issue. Problems arising due to extreme weather conditions (e.g. storms and high winds) are not covered.	☑ 👍
Flashings	Leaking or loose	Contact After Build.	☑
Flashings	Discoloured	External components will discolour due to weathering.	🚫
Floor finishes		Contact After Build. Damage after occupation is not covered.	☑
Floor structures	Noise	Contact After Build in first 6 months. Thereafter minor creaks are normal and can be expected.	☑

Your Warranty Check-List

Not sure what is covered?

ITEM	ISSUE	COMMENTS	
Garage door	Locks, cables and opening action	Contact After Build.	☑
Gas installation		If you smell gas or suspect a gas leak you MUST shut of the gas supply, do not operate anything electrical, leave the property and call the supplier's emergency number. Then contact After Build.	☑
Grouting	Cracking	Contact After Build in the first 6 months. Thereafter minor cracking due to shrinkage is homeowner maintenance.	☑ 👍
Gutters and downpipes		Contact After Build. Problems arising from debris in the gutters (dead leaves etc.) are the home-owner's responsibility and this will not be covered.	☑
Immersion heater	Failure	Contact After Build.	☑
Kitchen units	Door alignment	This is homeowner maintenance.	👍
Kitchen units/worktops	De-lamination	Contact After Build. If de-lamination is due to water spillage caused by the homeowner you may not be covered.	☑
Landscaping		As homeowner you are responsible for the maintenance of the garden and its contents.	👍
Meters and essential services		As homeowner you should contact your service provider directly.	🚫
Nail/screw pops	Excessive	Contact After Build. We will attend once to correct this after the first 12 months.	☑

Your Warranty Check-List

Not sure what is covered?

ITEM	ISSUE	COMMENTS	
Paths and paving slabs	Movement.	Contact After Build in the first 12 months. Small movement may occur over time due to expansion and contraction of the sub-soil as weather conditions apply.	☑
Roof		Contact After Build. We cannot take responsibility for weather damage (e.g. loose or slipped ridge tiles).	☑
Sanitary ware		All claims for damage to sanitary ware must be made in accordance with the developer's formal handover process.	⊘
Silicone sealant and mastic	Internal and external	Contact After Build in the first 6 months. Thereafter this will be homeowner maintenance.	☑ 👍
Settlement in the garden		Some settlement of new top soil is normal and to be expected.	⊘
Structural defects		Contact After Build.	☑
Shower doors		Contact After Build.	☑
Soft furnishings		The homeowner must contact the developer.	⊘
Telephones	Line	Line connection is the homeowner's responsibility.	⊘
Telephones	Sockets	The homeowner may be responsible for slave socket connection (see developer policy).	!
TV	Service	Usually it is the homeowner's responsibility to make arrangements with a service provider.	⊘

Your Warranty Check-List

Not sure what is covered?

ITEM	ISSUE	COMMENTS	
TV	Sockets/dish	Contact After Build. Your home should be wired for service - in the case of apartments it is usually connected to a communal receiving dish.	☑
	Aerial	Homeowner's responsibility	⊘
Water services	Leaking pipes and taps	Contact After Build.	☑
Windows	Frames and furniture	Contact After Build.	☑
Wood		Minor separations, shrinkage and/or warping are normal and can be expected.	⊘

Homeowner Guidance Sheet

Top 10 tips

Priority

1. Always be sure you know how to shut-off the water supply to your property - find the STOP-COCK and be certain other members of your household also know where it is.

2. If you have a GAS supply - be certain you know where the CONTROL VALVE can be located (usually in the meter box). The METER BOX is generally outside the building and you should have been provided with a METER KEY to allow you access either in an emergency or simply to read the meter.

3. Be sure you know where to locate the ELECTRICITY CONSUMER BOX - this is the point at which mains electricity enters your property. Your supply is protected through a number of small devices (RCD's) that will automatically disconnect or TRIP-OUT in the event of a problem. These are particularly sensitive (for your safety) and this can happen when a light bulb blows or if you have a faulty appliance. These can be re-set by returning the relevant switch to the on position.

4. Complete all appliance WARRANTY CARDS now (fridge, freezer, oven, hob, dishwasher etc) and follow the instructions for registration.

5. If you have GAS HEATING it is your responsibility to ensure that the BOILER is serviced regularly according to the manufacturer's specification - it could affect your warranty cover if you don't!

6. Familiarise yourself with the operation of the SMOKE DETECTORS and check they are working by pressing the TEST BUTTON.

Top 10 tips

General

7. As your home is lived in and heated, timber and other materials will shrink and this can cause SMALL CRACKS on wall and ceiling finishes. These cracks are not structurally significant and can be put right in the normal process of redecoration.

8. Because a significant amount of water is used in the construction of your home (cement, plaster, paint etc.) your property needs to be well ventilated to allow moisture to evaporate as the structure dries out. Leave windows or, at least, the TRICKLE VENTS (slotted vents in the window frame) open for as long as you can each day.

9. To prevent the build-up of excessive condensation while the construction materials dry out it is advisable to leave fitted wardrobe doors ajar initially to prevent MOULD on clothes from occurring.

10. Your new home will need maintaining and it is your responsibility to ensure that within the first 12 MONTHS you should attend to INTERIOR PAINTWORK and within 2 YEARS you should attend to your EXTERIOR PAINTWORK.

Homeowner Guidance Sheet

Plumbing

To help you understand the requirements of a modern plumbing system we have listed some key points:-

Stop valve

As water enters your property (blue pipe) it is controlled by the main STOP VALVE (Pic. A). This allows you to turn off the supply in the event of an emergency. Make sure you know where it is located.

Isolation valve

To provide independent control of the water supply to certain points around your property you may find the use of ISOLATION VALVES (Pic. B) in places such as the WC, kitchen sink and wash hand basins.

Gas control valve

Gas is delivered to your property (yellow pipe) via a CONTROL VALVE next to the meter.

User manual

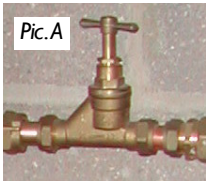
Always read your USER MANUAL. In the event you can't find your manual the After Build website has links to most boiler manufacturers.
www.afterbuild.com/Heating PDF's.html

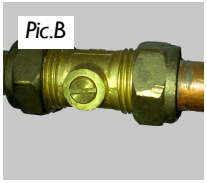
Bleeding radiators

Trapped air can prevent a radiator from fully heating up (cool at the top). To release the air turn off the heating and allow to cool down. Using a radiator bleed key open the valve (Pic. C) and listen for the hiss of escaping air.

Re-pressurising the system

Sealed heating systems may need re-pressurising from time-to-time. You will find a pressure gauge on or close to the boiler (Pic. D) - if this indicates the system pressure has dropped you need to re-pressurise the system. Follow your boiler manual for instructions.


Pic.A


Pic.B

Pic.C

Pic.D

Blocked drains

There may be occasions when you suffer a blocked drain - often the cause is unsuitable household waste causing an obstruction. Some sub-contractors may charge you for attending a blocked drain if they discover this to be the cause.

Homeowner Guidance Sheet

Decorating

There may be occasions when we need to arrange to carry out minor painting and decorating works:-

Before we arrive

Very often the attending operative may have other calls to make in the same day and time is therefore at a premium. Please ensure that before he arrives you move any obstructions that may otherwise hinder his safe access to the work area i.e. furniture and appliances. Our operative will need a minimum of 1 meter clearance all round to be able to carry out your work.

Preparation

When it is necessary to prepare and fill an area of wall or ceiling it is likely we will need to attend on two separate occasions (the second call being rubbing down and re-painting once any filler has dried out). We will, where possible arrange this over consecutive days but we cannot always guarantee this.

Paint colour

Over time paint changes colour very slightly - this is a process caused by many things including the quality of the air (e.g. smoking causes rapid discolouration) and light. Therefore re-painting can sometimes be noticed where the boundaries of the old and the new paint meet one another. When painting a large area we will paint to the nearest natural divide e.g. door frame, archway, corner. We will not necessarily re-paint the entire wall or ceiling unless the amount of repair work has been extensive.

Similarly we will not re-paint all the timber work, but would typically re-paint one length of skirting board for example. There may be occasions where we consider that it is sensible to wait for a property to fully finish drying out before reviewing any work we may need to arrange i.e. extensive shrinkage. To avoid the inconvenience that numerous visits can cause we may advise that the drying out process is given the opportunity to stabilise before we assess what (if any) work we may need to organise. Neither After Build or your developer can be responsible for paint mismatch due to age or environmental conditions.

Homeowner Guidance Sheet

Appliances

If your new property has built in or free standing electrical appliances there are several useful things you need to know:-

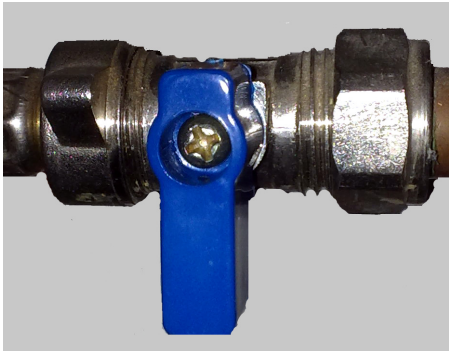
1. Each appliance has a warranty card (this is the warranty between the homeowner and manufacturer). Most appliance warranties will provide you 12 months cover for parts and labour in the event of a genuine malfunction or failure (some manufacturers offer 2 years). This is not covered under the Builder's Liability period. It is important that you complete the details requested by each card. We would recommend that you keep a safe copy of these before posting back to the manufacturer. Or if you prefer, complete the cards and post them to After Build - we will keep copies on file and send them to the manufacturers on your behalf;

2. ALWAYS read the user manual before operating any equipment;

3. In the unlikely event you experience a problem with your appliance make sure you have checked for electrical power i.e. that the switch is in the ON position at the switched fused spur (pic A) - these are usually labelled Fridge/ Dishwasher etc. And where applicable, the water supply is switched ON (pic B).If you are satisfied that the problem is specific to the appliance and not the connections you will need to contact the manufacturer. If you have sent your completed cards to After Build we will be happy to make the call on your behalf.

4. In such cases the manufacturer should arrange for a qualified engineer to call and diagnose the cause of the problem.

Pic. A



Pic. B (lever in the OFF position - in line is ON)

Homeowner Guidance Sheet

Your responsibility

There is a myth that new homes don't require maintenance or up-keep. Clearly this isn't the case. Every new homeowner needs to maintain their property if they wish it to last - when all said and done it is most likely the single greatest investment you will make in a lifetime - so make sure it lasts a lifetime by taking appropriate care of it.

Internally

Most properties are painted in a light coloured emulsion - this satisfies most palettes but is not intended to last forever. We would advise that after 12 months you consider freshening this up and, at that stage should you prefer a different scheme, change the colour maybe!

Equipment needs maintenance too - especially your heating and hot water system. Don't forget the annual service for your boiler (otherwise you may invalidate your warranty).

Putting up shelves and fixing brackets to your walls needs a little forethought. There will be electrical cables and plumbing pipes behind your walls and you don't want to interfere with these. Also different wall constructions require specific fixing devices, so take good advice from your local DIY store before you start work. Many new properties now days have under floor heating so again be aware of this possibility before you drill holes in the floor to fix door stops and so forth. And remember, electrical and plumbing work must only be carried out by competent qualified tradesmen - never attempt this kind of work by yourself.

Externally

Again the paintwork on the outside of your property is not intended to last forever. We would advise you look at this after 2 years and certainly maintain it by re-painting/varnishing every 2-3 years thereafter.

Keep your garden in check - don't allow overgrown plants and shrubs to block air bricks, vents or drains. Keep an eye open for debris accumulating in gutters and don't allow flat roofs to go un-checked either.

Homeowner Guidance Sheet

External

Looking after the outside of your home is just as important as taking care of the inside. If you do not have the benefit of a managing agent then you should take personal responsibility for general upkeep. Here are a few points we think are useful:-

Painting

To prevent rot and deterioration of external timber work, make sure that the exterior of your property is regularly re-painted or re-varnished. The first time you should re-paint/varnish outside is after 2 years and thereafter probably every 3-4 years.

Gutters

Check your gutters and have them cleared annually - especially if your property is in close proximity to trees. Blocked gutters and downpipes can be the cause of internal damp.

Flat roofs

It is advisable that you check all flat roofs annually to ensure they are kept in good condition. Make certain rain water outlets remain clear and are not blocked.

Damp proof course / air bricks

Make sure that the level of soil around the outside of your property is kept at least 2 courses of bricks below the damp proof course. Keep air bricks and vents clear from soil and garden debris.

Drain access

Do not cover drains, inspection chambers or rodding eyes with soil, paving or other material.

Efflorescence

You may notice a white deposit appear on external brick-work. This is called efflorescence and is caused by the salts coming out of the brick clay and can be removed with a soft brush and is harmless.

Bad weather

Inclement weather (heavy rain, high winds and snow/ice) can cause problems (dislodged roof tiles, fence panels, dropped gutters, frozen outside taps). These will not be considered defects and can be best dealt with through your insurance policy.

Managing agents

Purpose

Managing agents are usually employed by the developer to manage the common areas of apartment dwellings. This could be the gardens and grounds, car parking, driveways and gates, lobby, stairwells and lifts, corridors and bin stores - in other words all those ameneties commonly shared by the residents at the development.

Depending upon the arrangements it is usual for each resident to pay an annual service charge towards the cost of this facility and the developer will have provided you with this information.

The benefits include having someone on hand to take responsibility for general maintenance and repairs to problems in the common parts.

This may well extend to gardening, mowing of lawns, cleaning of gutters and disposal of rubbish.

In most arrangements a programme of external decorative upkeep will be agreed so that paintwork and drain water goods are maintained to a good standard.

Management

There is usually an appointed manager who will liaise between the developer and the residents and in some cases there may be an office at the development.

Notes

We have left you with a 'blank' page as it is sometimes useful to be able to keep notes for future reference.

Customer charter

Our aim
To be the market leading provider of property warranty management for new homes.

Our promise
To professionally and responsibly manage the developer's warranty obligations and provide the homeowner with a first class experience.

Service standards
To respond to all incoming calls and instructions and when necessary calling the home-owner to agree a time and date for defect work to be conducted. To carry out work within 30 days wherever possible.

Communication and involvement
We will answer the telephone promptly or in instances of peak calls, take a message and respond to that message within 1 hour. We continually seek the views of customers and the market, through direct contact and research to ensure the best service.

Performance
An audit procedure ensures we maintain and improve upon our high service standards

Confidentiality
All information will remain confidential and will only be released to a third party for the purposes of remedying a defect or where it is legally required.

Offices
Our offices are open Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm. A message service operates during evenings, weekends, Bank Holidays and peak calling hours.

Complaints
We take any complaint about our business, people or services most seriously. Please address any complaint to: The Managing Director at our central office address (page 6) and we will aim to respond to all complaints within 5 working days.

Important telephone numbers

*** After Build - Non-Emergency**
0845 456 4631

*** After Build - Emergency** (where available - see page 8)
0845 652 0899

*** Developer** (for you to add)

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*** Managing agent** (where applicable - for you to add)

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*** Local authority** (for you to add)

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*** Security/alarms company** (for you to add)

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*** Your insurance company** (for you to add)

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